

Remarks

Claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 10-13, 15, 16, 18, and 21-26 are pending in the above-identified patent application. With this Response, claims 1, 5, 10, 13, 16, and 24 are amended; claims 25 and 26 are canceled; and new claims 27-31 are added. Upon entry of the current amendments, claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 10-13, 15, 16, 18, 21-24, and 27-31 are pending.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and further examination of the application in view of the amendments above and remarks below.

Allowed and Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication in the Office Action that claim 24 is allowed and that claims 25 and 26 are allowed if rewritten independent claim form.

Independent claims 1 and 13, from which claims 25 and 26 depend, respectively, are amended to include the subject matter of claims 25 and 26, respectively. Accordingly, Applicants consider claims 1 and 13 to be allowed as amended.

Discussion of Claim Amendments

It is respectfully submitted that the amendments to the application are fully supported by the application as originally filed and that such amendments do not present new matter.

As mentioned directly above, claims 1 and 13 are amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims 25 and 26, respectively. Similar to claim 1, independent claims 5 and 16 are amended to feature a spacer member positioned between the first and second bearings to space the bearings apart and such that an annular gap is between the spacer and the rotor and that the gap between the spacer and the rotor extends along the length of the spacer. Support for this feature can be found in the specification at, e.g., page 10, lines 22-25, and Figure 1.

In addition, claims 1, 5, 13, 16, and 24 are amended to correct a grammatical error (i.e., “bearing” should be “bearings”).

Claim 10 is amended to correct a grammatical error (i.e., “discontinuity” should be “discontinuities”).

Support for new dependent claims 27-31 can be found in the specification at, e.g., page 9, lines 14-16.

Fees for Claim Amendments

No fees are believed to be due for adding dependent claims 27-31 because of claims previously paid for and subsequently canceled. However, if any fees are required for adding claims 27-31, please charge all of the appropriate fee(s) to the Kagan Binder Deposit Account No. 50-1775 and notify us of the same.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 5, 11-13, 16, and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Miwa (U.S. Pat. No. 5,058,927) in view of Jen (4,455,121).

Claims 1, 5, 13, and 16 are independent claims. As discussed above in the Allowable Subject Matter section, claims 1 and 13 are amended to include subject matter that the Office Action has indicated would make claims 1 and 13 allowed. And as discussed above in the Discussion of Claim Amendments section, independent claims 5 and 16 are amended in a manner similar to that which made claim 1 allowed.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 1, 5, 11-13, 16, and 21 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Miwa in view of Jen be withdrawn.

Claims 3, 7, 15, and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Miwa in view of Jen as applied to claims 1, 5, 11-13, and 21, above, and further in view of Katsuhiko et al. (JP-11101250).

It is respectfully submitted that the amendment to independent claims 1, 5, 13, and 16, from which claims 3, 7, 15, and 18, depend respectively, renders this rejection moot.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 3, 7, 15, and 18 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Miwa in view of Jen as applied to claims 1, 5, 11-13, and 21, above, and further in view of Katsuhiko et al. be withdrawn.

Claim 10 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Miwa in view of Jen as applied to claims 1, 5, 11-13, and 21, above, and further in view of Takada (U.S. Pat. No. 5,203,592).

It is respectfully submitted that the amendment to independent claim 5, from which claim 10 depends, renders this rejection moot.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Miwa in view of Jen as applied to claims 1, 5, 11-13, and 21, above, and further in view of Takada be withdrawn.

Claims 22 and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Miwa in view of Jen as applied to claims 1, 5, 11-13, and 21, above, and further in view of known prior art as denoted at page 1 of the instant application, supplemented by common knowledge in the art as exemplified by Blalock et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,095,159).

It is respectfully submitted that the amendment to independent claim 1, from which claims 22 and 23 ultimately depend, renders this rejection moot.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 22 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Miwa in view of Jen as applied to claims 1, 5, 11-13, and 21, above, and further in view of known prior art as denoted at page 1 of the instant application, supplemented by common knowledge in the art as exemplified by Blalock et al. be withdrawn.

Conclusion

Approval of the application and allowance of the claims is earnestly solicited. In the event that a phone conference between the Examiner and the Applicants' undersigned attorney would help resolve any issues in the application, the Examiner is invited to contact said attorney at (651) 275-9831.

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